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SPACE-TIME

ITS RELATION TO MAN

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A Transaction of the Fundamentals Group of the Theosophical Research Centre, London.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This paper is a compilation from notes of the discussion of a small group, consisting of Laurence J. Bendit, M.D., Phoebe D. Bendit, A. B. Crow, Doris Groves, C. R. Groves, M.Sc., and E. Lester Smith, D.Sc., F.R.I.C. It is not intended to supplant the older books on the subjects of reincarnation, karma, and the like, but as a commentary on these basic ideas, seen from the angle of members of the group. The matter is put out in this concentrated form, scarcely more than notes, because to expand them at all—and each paragraph could almost become a chapter in itself—would mean to write a book, for which at present there is no time even if the capacity existed. So this paper is offered, not to those for whom the scheme of man's evolution through many lives is a new one, but in the hope that it may prove suggestive and provocative, as well as intelligible, to those who have already got a general background of the subject.

In any case, whatever its interest may be to others, the members of the group found the work highly stimulating and interesting, and each one learned and discovered for himself far more than was ever said or written down in the course of the meetings. And this in itself proves that the technique of group-work is one which it is well worth while to cultivate.

The idea of man as a re-incarnating entity is a very old one, and with it goes the related principle of karma, or the law of cause and effect operative in human affairs.

Taken at their simplest and most matter-of-fact level, these doctrines, widespread as the belief in them is, become very dry and materialistic. They do not teach us enough about the nature of man, or what it is that is reborn after the physical body has been cast off; and karma may appear as a matter of book-keeping, with credits of good on one side of the page, and debits of evil on the other. Moreover, it lends itself to a negative attitude towards

life: "It's my karma and I can't help it", or "It's his karma and therefore I need not help him". Some people, moreover, take refuge from the need to live positively in the present by imagining past glories as Pharaohs, Queens, or High Priests, or by putting off into the future the effort needed to work and achieve something to-day.

Modern scientific ideas on the nature of time and the physical universe, as well as the introspective study of man and his experience, however, shed much fresh light on these matters and give them a new vitality. Conversely the student of psychology finds in the basic principles of karma and reincarnation food for much thought, as well as a practical philosophy to apply to his work.

The basic question of all is, *what is man, and what is his relationship to the world in which he lives*? This is, of course, a fundamental question and, if it could be answered fully, it would solve every riddle about the universe and the nature of God as the transcendental Intelligence which created it. But if we take a more restricted field, and ask ourselves what is man *as personality*, and what are the laws by which this personality lives in the manifested world, the subject acquires a horizon within the confines of which the finite mind can operate and understand.

It is axiomatic in occultism that man is a microcosm, that he is in himself a miniature replica of the great ordered universe in which he lives. As such, part of him is manifest and explicit, while the rest is hidden and unmanifested, though not necessarily latent and inactive. Of him as spirit it may be said, "Having pervaded the Universe with one fragment of myself, I remain", for "universe" in this case substituting "personality and its environment".

The unmanifest spiritual man we cannot understand directly, at least as yet. At best we can give it attributes —*Atma Buddhi, Manas,* or *Sat, Ananda, Chit,* and so on —which express certain partial truths about it. But we need to look upon this unmanifested part as the root of his being, and as of a spiritual character in so far as it is not restricted by space-time, or rather by any form of space-time we can comprehend. This study applies to

that part of man which, starting so to speak at the point where the timeless-spaceless impinges on space-time, is extended into space-time and therefore into the material world.

This extended or projected aspect of man is his personality, that aspect of him which thinks, feels, intuits and perceives through the senses, and acts through the efferent or conative functions: it comprises his mind, soul or "psyche", and also his dense physical body. It is also that part of him which is subject to the laws of time and space, and is therefore impermanent and temporary, according to the cyclic law which governs the workings of the material world. And yet, as it is related to and depends upon the eternal and timeless spirit, it must partake also in relative measure of the immortality of that spirit. Thus we may describe man as a triple being: spirit unmanifest, timeless, unextended, transcending time-space; body fully extended and geared in to the physical world where natural rhythms and cycles hold complete sway; and between these, soul or psyche, anchored at one end in the timeless spirit, and at the other to the body in the physical world. Being, as it were, the child of both worlds, the psyche has something in it of both the timeless, spiritual quality, and of the animal, bodily nature and its rhythms as well. The relative proportions of spirituality and animality in the psyche depends upon how far the particular individual has travelled on the evolutionary path which leads from the animal, through the human, to the superhuman or divine status.

At this stage it is well to make clear the difference between the psyche of the animal and that of man. It must be allowed that animals have a psychic life: they obviously feel things emotionally, and the highest of them begin to think and make judgments on simple lines. But there is a fundamental difference between man and subman, which is that the animal does not exist basically as an individual, but to a greater or lesser degree depends for its existence upon the species to which it belongs. It is true that the single embodied animal undergoes its own experience. But its response through that body to what it undergoes is governed intrinsically by the behav-

iour patterns of the species as a whole, and, in given circumstances, tends to follow a stereotyped course. It is practically only in the animal which has been in contact with man, and especially the domestic animal, that individual variations of response begin to be found.

Man has passed a critical point in the evolution of consciousness, in that he has acquired the germs of certain powers which are capable of carrying him an infinite distance beyond the animal: the power to think, to choose between courses of conduct, to make judgments, and irrespective of his embodiment to become aware of himself as an individual. When the first step of the human span of evolution is reached, these powers are practically latent. But as time passes and experience accumulates, so does the germ of individuality develop, to reach its fruition at the further end of the human range, when man becomes a god and enters the next kingdom of nature beyond the human. Between the extremes, man lives, as a being partly individualised, but still partly embedded in the mass or group-consciousness characteristic of the animal level of evolution.

For the sake of convenience we may make a theoretical division half-way through the human range, where animal-man becomes man-god: that is, the balance of animal to spiritual (divine or god-like) qualities changes over from a preponderance of the first to an increasing predominance of the second. In practice the division is arbitrary, but a mathematical point can be fixed in these terms. The turning point, however, is important to theory because the *dharma* or spiritual goal of the individual changes when the half-way mark is passed.

Before this point, the dharma of each is to establish his individuality at the personal level. This means that he has to cultivate selfhood, which in practice means selfishness in order to differentiate himself from the group-consciousness of the animal. Only so can he become separate and discreet, a "monad" with individual and unique qualities of its own. At this stage the qualities which the animal has acquired in the course of his evolution, and carried with him into the human kingdom, will tend to be intensified by the stimulus coming from his

spiritual potentiality. He will therefore become acquisitive and aggressive, and show many of the qualities which have now become anachronisms in civilised communities. But, until he is firmly established as an individual at the earth level, it is his dharma—and right, from the spiritual viewpoint—that this should be so.

When he passes the half-way mark, the aim changes. In principle he should by now have established an earthly self-hood, and he passes on to the next phase, which is that of carrying that self-hood with him into a new kind of group-consciousness marking his return towards union with the spiritual divine. The purpose of the whole cycle seems to be the development of self-consciousness and self-awareness on the subjective side, together with mastery and control of the environment on the objective side. In other words, he has to learn the laws of the three worlds of thought, feeling and sensation-action in which his personality exists, and this he can do only by acquiring full control of that personality as the instrument through which he contacts those realms.

In doing this—at any rate for our humanity in the present *manvantara* or cycle of manifestation—manas, the thinking function of man, appears to play the predominant role. At this stage the thinking mind is the seat of man's consciousness, and, the instrument whereby he gradually learns to make a distinction between something which he comes to know as "I" and something else which he learns to regard as "Not I". Thus is born in the personality the quality of *ahankara*. *Ahankara* is the universal principle of separativeness, which in the human personality expresses itself as "I-am-ness", the personal ego, within the enveloping cocoon of the thinking function, or lower *manas*, and this is necessarily associated with the unfolding of *chitta* or conscious awareness.

Traditionally, these things take place only because there is, in the mind, a nodal point known as *antahkarana**, where the spiritual nature impinges on the personal.

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* This word appears to be used by scholars to denote several things, though all these are varying aspects of a fundamental principle. The authority for using it as we have done is H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophical Glossary. The same applies to *ahankara* and a number of other words.

Antahkarana is, in fact, the pivot around which the development of the personality takes place. It is, even, the cause of that development, reflecting as it does the Atmic Monad, the very cause of human existence in the personality, or impermanent part of man. According to Sri Sankaracharya, antahkarana has four attributes as it were clustered about it: those of *Buddhi, Manas, Ahankara* and *Chitta*. It is, itself, a direct reflection of Atma into matter. Clearly, Buddhi and Manas are "higher" qualities, being those of the self or Spritual Ego. Ahankara, however, is the quality which first appears as the "lower" selfhood—that which gives rise to the idea of "I, myself", and therefore of oneself as distinct from other entities and from an external world which is therefore regarded as "Not I". Chitta, on the other hand, sometimes translated as "consciousness" seems to be the quality of response to stimuli which gives awareness both of the separation of ahankara from the external world and of the relationship and interplay of energies between this world and the self. Consciousness, in these terms, is thus a dual function, depending upon the impact of processes taking place within the mind, and others taking place outside it. Antahkarana is the subjective component of consciousness, and expresses itself in the personality as the nucleus of the three principles, Lower Manas, Kama or desire and the etheric field.

Antahkarana is, according to C. W. Leadbeater, the critical point between the permanent, or abstract, or Higher Mind and the Lower, concrete, personal and impermanent Mind and, as such, represents the "lowest" point of the causal (or Higher Mental) sheath.

One may use analogies for it, all of which suggest something useful. Thus, it may be represented as the centre of a circle of which the circumference is the junction of the etheric to the dense physical body, the area comprised inside being the field of psyche or soul (*Kamamanas*). This represents it as having no size, being a mathematical point, and only existing as a concept, not a material fact.

Antahkarana may be taken as the point of suspension of a pendulum: the weight or bob being the physical body,

the rod or string being the psyche, ahankara the point of consciousness, being at any point on the string at any given time. Which suggests that, as the weight swings through the full arc of "time", and the point of suspension, on the contrary, is immobile it is therefore—in terms of clock time—not in time but timeless, and therefore eternal. Similarly, if we consider the swinging parts as vibrating, polarised into "opposites", antahkarana is the place where polarities and opposites resolve themselves.

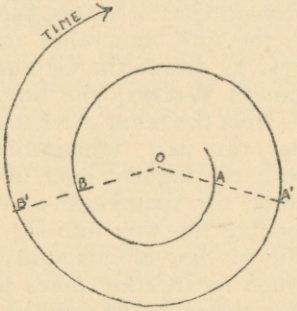
It may be taken as the junction between the spiritual and material in man, and, therefore, regarded from the viewpoint of the spiritual Ego, as "matter" or "form" whilst from that of the personality it is Spirit or Being. It is a two-way valve, transmitting intuitive data to the lower mind or consciousness, and sensory perceptive data to the spiritual self. It can be looked upon as a lens: focussing the spiritual light and energies into the personality, and likewise casting images of the material world upward into the spiritual world.

One can go on finding analogies: the Junior Warden in Masonry, the Roman God of Gates, Janus, one of whose faces looked into the city, the other out into the open country, the Self (C. G. Jung), the Genius (A. Kingsford), the Intruder (Kenneth Walker), the Stranger, and so on. One feels about it, from the point of view of the personality, that behind it lies the vast, unmanifested, unextended unknown: that it is the highest limit of objective (time-space) consciousness, the spearhead of the consciousness of the *present*, opening the way into the *future*.

From the point of view of this study, Antahkarana is *the point from which incarnation takes place*, incarnation being a projection through the antahkarana (timeless-spaceless, as far as the Einsteinian conceptions are concerned) into space-time of an image of the true Self or Being, transcendent of space and time. Reincarnation is thus a succession of such projections, separated by a withdrawal of the individual to the antahkarana centre between such projections. The succession of incarnations is serial, each one being related either directly or indirectly to those which (in terms of time) have gone before, according to certain natural, if not explicitly known laws.

The basic law of evolution is cyclic. History is said to repeat itself. But it does so with a difference, which is due to the passage of time and the evolution of the universe during this passage of time. Thus, rather than the circle, the spiral appears to be the simplest figure which represents the behaviour of life in the space-time worlds. One may take it as an expanding or a contracting spiral; or as one rising upwards or as one coming down; or as a spiral wound round a cone both rising and expanding, falling and contracting; and, coming down to details, one needs to realise that each spiral is itself made up of many lesser spirals one within the other. (It seems probable that the ultimate physical atom, as described by Leadbeater and Besant, is in fact a glyph of the material universe, consisting as it does of spiral within spiral of different grades of energy).

For the sake of simplicity, however, we can make use of such a diagram as follows to represent (1) at the centre O, the spiritual, "timeless" life, and (2) the physical world on the spiral line:—



It follows from this that there is a certain relationship between points A on one cycle or A^1 on another, but with a difference due to the progression from one cycle to the next.

If, instead of the Universe, we place man in this diagram, we then have:—O as the spirit at antahkarana, at once transcending time and likewise space since a mathematical point has no size (i.e., no extension in any spatial dimension). When the spirit incarnates, it projects

something of itself along a line such as O A, into the physical world at A. There that projection stays for a part of the time (represented by the spiral) before withdrawing once more through the space between O and the spiral, to its own *pralaya* or state of non-manifestation at O. Later, the spirit manifests again by projecting out to B, and repeats the process with variations.

In this analogy the line between O and the physical spiral represents the psychic (kama-manasic) realm, that of the mind or soul, which, also, being part of the personality, is impermanent, and which is absorbed between incarnations into O, the spiritual-causal-antahkarana, except where, as sometimes happens, an incarnation takes place early, when only the physical body, not the mental equipment, is changed.

This, in turn, suggests several things:

First, a Self incarnating at A may well have a personality entirely different from that of the same Self incarnated at B: the Self or Monad is the same, but the aspect of it manifesting at each point may be quite different, and even unrecognisable. By reincarnating, eventually, "all round the clock", however, that Self acquires a personality field of catholic powers, and becomes a whole and perfect man, by whom the limitations of ordinary humanity are transcended.

Another thing which is brought out is the link which there appears to be between widely separated incarnations. Thus it is conceivable that a person alive today may find himself faced with remote karma, let us say from ancient Egypt—having lived, say, in Greece, Rome, and the Middle Ages between times. The spiral diagram suggests the reason: that, from incarnation O A, he may have passed through O B, O C, O D, and so on, but it is only when he gets to O A^1—i.e., over the same relative point in the spiral—that incarnation O A resonates into incarnation O A^1 and activates latent forces which may arouse more or less explicit memories from life O A. This gives an opportunity of dealing with karma from O A—which, if not dealt with whilst at O A^1 may again become latent until a 3rd life over the corresponding point is reached.

It would therefore seem that, from the point of view

of the personality, it does not in the least follow that a person of outstanding characteristics in one life will necessarily be recognisable in the next, because of similar traits. On the contrary, it may well happen that some completely different aspect of the spiritual Ego is manifested in an incarnation taking place at O B from what is shewn at O A: a Napoleon or a Cæsar in one life may be a good and tender mother in another, and a poet or musician in a third. While it may be only when he incarnates "over the spiral" of his life as a soldier and statesman that, for better or worse, these characteristics once more become active, and the karma of the earlier life has to be dealt with. Nevertheless, as the individual evolves, more and more of the spiritual—and therefore permanent—quality becomes manifest through the mechanism of the personality, so that the latter becomes more consistent from life to life, as well as more rounded out, balanced in different aspects, and wider in its field of consciousness and ability to act effectively in different ways.

At the moment of death, the physical anchorage is lost. During physical life, the psyche may be considered as being a tense web between the spiritual pole and the earthly pole. It is like the energy-field between two poles, spirit and matter. When the physical body is lost, it is as if a piece of tense elastic were released at one end. The consciousness—at any rate in those who are beginning to be self-conscious in a spiritual way—as it were flicks up towards the spiritual, and then drops back towards the physical, just in so far as it is weighed down by earthly desires. In Tibetan philosophy the analogy is used of a ball bouncing, at first very high, but gradually finding a stable point at which to stop. After a while when it has found this steady point at some level of the psychic (astro-mental or kama-manasic) world, it digests and assimilates bit by bit the desire-material left over from its earthly experiences, and, in doing so, moves "up" until it reaches the purely mental level and is in Devachan. This momentary rise to the highest is suggested by the "dream" of the widower whose wife had just recently died. He dreamed she was with him, and said to him "When I

died I went straight up to God. But I wasn't allowed to stay there: I had to come down again and deal with things I had left behind, unresolved". Almost identical experiences are suggested in the text of the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Devachan is heaven because, being created of mental images by each individual for himself, it can be constantly and perfectly adjusted to what that individual likes; mental refusal or rejection automatically removes the "idea" rejected, whereas the wish to have anything immediately introduces that thing by creating it. The post-mortem stage before Devachan or heaven is reached is truly purgatorial, in that the individual in it is acted on by forces outside his control, and which, therefore, prevent him from creating an ideal image-world around himself. As these die down, so does purgatory become Elysium, then finally the perfect heaven.

The last stage before reincarnating is at least a momentary—if such a phrase can be used of the "timeless"—withdrawal of the individual consciousness into the spiritual aspect of antahkarana, i.e., to the causal, higher mental, level—prior to a return into manifestation in the psychic and physical worlds. Here, for a moment, the prodigal has returned to his father's home where he enjoys the perfection of freedom from the trammels of material life, no matter how subtle. It is also the state where personal knowledge gives way to illumination, and where, for a moment, the Self and the Universe are known in their entirety.

It is probably some dim recollection of this stage which is reflected in such poems as Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality", remembered despite the "shades of the prison house" which close around one as one re-enters the realms of time and is reborn on earth.

The law governing reincarnation appears to be much akin to the law of gravity: so long as there exists in the individual material which can be drawn back to earth, reincarnation must take place. This material is the unresolved, untransmuted, or, in psychological terms, unintegrated, animal portion of his personality which, belonging to the earth (i.e., to space-time) is, by its very nature,

subject to the gravitational law. It is intimately related to his past, in the realm of time, and is the result of his actions in that past. That is, it is the fruits of his karma, Reincarnation thus goes on until the individual is without karma. This means, until he ceases to generate fresh karma, by attaining a state of entire mastery and therefor freedom in the material worlds, and when the aftermath of karma still unresolved from his past has worked itself out. "The wheel of birth and death" then comes to a standstill and the man who has reached this point then passes out of the human kingdom into the one beyond.*

The forces of karma also determine the timing and placing of the reincarnation, so that the environment in which a man finds himself at birth—and before—is really of his own making. The timing so that he is born into a particular pattern of cosmic forces which have a direct bearing on his personality and the potentialities of that life, while spatially, he is placed in a particular nation and geographical location, and in a particular family in that place. In this sense, it is true to say that the child is the parent and creator of his own parents—a point to be borne in mind by the one who, imbued with psychological ideas, is ready to blame all and everybody for his unhappiness except himself.

At the same time, it seems that there is a certain selective action in the karma to be dealt with by an indi-

* The student of science may like to elaborate somewhat the relatively simple statement made above by comparing the law of karma with the more elaborate laws which govern the revolution of a planetary body round the central sun. For, as has been suggested, the personal expressions of an evolving Ego or Self during a series of incarnations may be regarded as revolving round that Ego in a spiral path. If a planet is revolving in an orbit round a *moving* sun, its path is actually a spiral owing to the movement of the sun itself. Suppose such a planet were to explode, so as to eject fragments in various directions with a force strong enough to overcome the planetary gravitational attraction, each of these fragments would then revolve around the central sun in an orbit the shape, length and period of which would depend upon the direction and velocity with which it had been ejected. But every one of these orbits would pass through that point *relative to the sun* at any given moment of time where the planet had exploded, and therefore at some time near, distant or intermediate, each fragment would pass through that point and so would come again into the same relationship with the sun as it had occupied at the moment of the explosion.

In a similar way it would seem that every force set in motion by an incarnated personality, the effect of which is not reaped during the same incarnation as that in which it has been set in motion will, at some time come again into the same relationship with the Ego which existed at the time of its generation. Hence, the Ego will reap the appropriate reaction through one of its later personalities. 'Tomorrow it will judge, or after many days'.

vidual in any one life. There is a tradition that certain transcendental Intelligences, the *Lipika, Devarajas,* or *Lords of Karma,* determine this. It is probably true to say that Their function is not so much to precipitate karma as to withold it. The Lipika are sometimes spoken of as the Regents of the Cardinal Points of the Earth, and are placed respectively North, South, East and West. The logical minded must question this, if applied to geographical points because, though there are North and South Poles, there are no fixed East and West: a person at any point on the globe—except its poles—has the cardinal points only in relation to where he is standing. Thus the geographical simile must be taken as relative to the individual, and as indicating the totality of himself, seen as a spiritual centre, projected out on to the surface of the earth: a circle, divided like a compass-card, with four theoretical cardinal points. (These may be equated with the four psychic functions described by Jung, the four quarters of the Zodiac or any other four-fold scheme applicable to human nature).

Returning to our spiral diagram, we can readily understand that when a projection of the Self into incarnation takes place say in an "easterly" direction, his main function in life will be to deal with "eastern" material, the rest remaining more or less latent for the time being.

Karma by definition is the result of the interaction of energies acting according to the laws of the external world upon the individual. As such, it follows that, properly speaking, only indivdualised beings can create karmic patterns. The unselfconscious, unindividualised animal, does not create karma because he blindly and automatically follows the dictates of his own nature. But *karma* begins to shape when self acts upon not-self—self and not-self being opposite poles, between which there is, as always, a creative field. This creative field is the soul or psyche of man—kama-manas.

But though the root of karma is in this field, it spreads from there into wider realms—just as electricity, generated between the poles of a magnet, is conducted away and produces results elsewhere than in the field itself. This happens in two ways:—

1. In space: it is axiomatic that nothing happening in one part of the universe is isolated, but that the *whole* universe is affected. Thus, if one jumps off the floor, one pushes the earth away from one in so doing. This in turn affects the orbit of the earth round the sun, and so the movement of the sun itself. This in turn acts step by step upon the whole Galaxy—and beyond. Thus, one's own smallest action repercusses throughout the cosmos, and what is said of the physical world applies equally to the psychic.

2. In time: any cause set in motion by oneself *now*, in the material world, reflects forward—and, though this is unintelligible to the ordinary mind, backward too—from the moment in which it starts. This may appear platitudinous enough, when we think that the action of a Hitler in wrecking a continent will be felt for decades or centuries to come. But it is important to remember this in understanding the problem of *karma* in the case of the individual man.

For individual man, as spirit, lives at any moment of time not only definitely and explicitly under the influence of his past, but also, more or less implicitly under the latent influence of his future too—each man, unlike the animal, having a teleological goal uniquely his own. That is to say, his life is spent where karma (from the past) and dharma (the right pattern for action in the present, directed towards the ultimate future, that is, right relationship to the present environment) meet. The word future is qualified as "ultimate" because, though the goal of each one of us is, in some way we cannot understand fixed from the beginning of time by an act of freewill or choice at the spiritual level—it is, in fact, a timeless permanent thing—but its achievement can (in terms of time) be brought nearer or postponed. Inevitably it must be reached some time. But whether this is done in a larger or smaller number of millenia depends upon the choices and decisions made at any and every stage of evolution in the personality of the one concerned.

For the animal, unindividualised and unselfconscious, there is no good and evil action, only experience of

pleasure or pain. For self-conscious man, the problem becomes increasingly acute and momentous as his individuality increases and with it the responsibility due to his freedom to choose consciously between alternative courses of action. Yet the meaning of good and evil changes as he himself develops. As we have already argued, the self-interest of the primitive as he struggles to emerge from mass-consciousness and to establish himself as "I" is good and right—even though it may be painful. Not to be selfish and aggressive is to let oneself slip backward in evolution away from individuality into the mass, and is therefore evil and wrong—even though it may be pleasant. Yet at a later stage, when the higher aspects of the same selfhood begin to make themselves felt, the very qualities of selfishness and egotism which were of such value in reaching a certain stage become obstacles to be overcome and left behind: the good of yesterday has become the evil of to-day.

Karma is the principal agent by which we learn the lessons of good and evil. For karma itself is neither good nor bad: it is the working out of law, of justice, of that constant activity in nature which seeks always to maintain equilibrium and balance—for the continued existence of the universe depends upon a balance of dynamic and ever-moving forces.

The impact of these forces on the individual may be pleasant or unpleasant, and in his earlier stages he couples pleasantness with the idea of goodness, suffering with that of evil, and to the primitive mind this is correct. For it is only when certain actions bring a back-lash of pain, whereas others lead to happy results, that the undeveloped mind can learn something of the laws to which he, being man, must conform. But later, when the second phase of man's growth is entered, little by little the lesson has to be accepted that the pain which comes from transgressing the law is as intrinsically good as the happiness which comes from co-operating with it—provided *both* are accepted by the individual to whom they occur. The word *both* is italicised because of the tendency of the would-be spiritual to reject pleasure and to indulge in self-mortification. And, just as too much pleasure-seeking leads one to the dust

and ashes of Dead Sea fruit, so does morbid self-mortification, as the very word tells us, lead to spiritual deadness. The law requires, here as in everything else, a balanced attitude and an acceptance of what comes to one.

An interesting sidelight on the problem of karma is suggested also by the relative degree of differentiation of the individual. For it seems probable that in the early stages of humanity, where the individual scarcely exists as such, and the group is paramount, the karma of any one man is very much that of the group, and only a little that of the individual. Thus the savage gains or loses very much what his tribe does, and he survives or perishes less according to his individual deserts than according to those of the village-community of which he is a part. Even to-day, and even in the semi-civilised West, much of this tradition remains. But, as individuality develops, so does the karmic pattern fit more closely round the individual and adapt itself to his own personal needs. It probably happened in the late war that many suffered, who, individually, had not earned that suffering, but underwent it because they were parts of a race or nation which had earned it. The reason for this, if true, is probably that the plastic material of the undifferentiated man can learn from any kind of impact. But when the formless clay begins to take on a shape, as a result of being moulded on the wheel, then the impacts required to perfect the form have to be carefully studied and adapted to his needs, lest damage or destruction result—and this is the work of the Lipika.

This may seem to deny the law of justice. But if we remember that we are concerned primarily with a timeless spirit, and only secondarily with the projection of that spirit into time, we shall see that this law can still hold good. Thus if a person be "undeservedly" killed or maimed by a bomb, the perfect balance still exists if, at some later time, the suffering is countered by some special opportunity or "piece of luck"—even if this does not occur until several lives ahead.

The law is just: that is to say, it is balanced. But to see this balance one has to see also the timeless and enduring background of spirit against which it works in

the realm of time. The man who can learn to do this, and to live with this point of view always in his mind, has the key to the problem of life because, knowing this, he can no longer reject some experience because it is painful, nor seek out other experience because it is pleasurable. But to him all experience becomes good for growth and increased understanding both of himself and of the world in which he has incarnated, and all things are therefore turned from seeming evil into actual good. In short, he has found the Philosophers' Stone, which has been the thing sought for by the wise of every age and every race since man, the Son of Mind, began.

THE
THEOSOPHICAL RESEARCH CENTRE

The objects of the Centre are as follows:—

1. To ensure that the Theosophical Society shall receive the full benefit of every advance in science, medicine, art, education and other realms of knowledge.

2. To influence the world of thought by the application of theosophical principles.

The Centre is at present composed of Groups engaged in study and research in Science, Medicine, Symbology, Education, and Psychology, etc. The nine Groups number about 100 members. Each Group is led by a member of the Theosophical Society but individual students need not be members. There are several types of Groups for both study and research, some are open, others are closed, according to the work that is being undertaken.

There is no subscription, but all members are expected to take part in the work and to buy the transactions as they are published.

PUBLICATIONS. These are nearly all out of print at the moment.

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